

DEFINING CONFIDENT MUSIC IMPROVISING: PERCEPTIONS AMONG  
UNIVERSITY IMPROVISATION TEACHERS

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Our society often values creativity as a central characteristic of excellent education, but for whatever reason many teachers suppress creativity. Improvisation, *the simultaneous composition and performance of musical ideas*, is a meaningful creative musical action, and confidence might be important to music improvising. Researchers have explored confidence, but the literature seems to be void of a definition for confidence as it relates to the particulars of music improvisation. Research also suggests gender may influence how individuals experience confident music improvisation. Since a definition of confident music improvisation seems needed, the primary purpose of this study was to define confidence as it relates to music improvisation. A secondary purpose was to label gender differences in descriptions of confident music improvisation. The research questions were: How do university improvisation teachers define confident music improvisation? How do male and female participants differ in describing confident music improvising? Is confidence important to music improvisation? Employing an open-ended online survey, the researcher randomly sampled university jazz, improvisation ensemble, and organ teachers (n=76). Overwhelmingly, confidence was labeled important to music improvisation. Cautiously, gender differences in describing essential themes of confident music improvising, *listening* and *openness to learning*, were illustrated. A theoretical definition was crafted employing open, axial, and theoretical coding. This procedure revealed multifaceted, interconnected themes, which were described using participant statements. Confident music improvisation was tentatively defined as a complex process, a direct and sequential link of *knowledge about music*, with *playing with authority*, with *flow*.

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*Educators*

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